

October 12, 2000

He will be missed.
My thoughts and prayers go out to his family. God bless Bruce Vento.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RONNIE SHOWS

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 11, 2000

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, I was away from the House on official business on Friday, October 6, 2000, and was unable to cast a recorded vote on rollcall 515.

On rollcall 515 I would have voted "yes" on H. Res. 612, Waiving Points of Order Against the Conference Report on H.R. 4475, Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations for FY 2001.

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN
CONFIRMATION

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 11, 2000

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I submit for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the attached statement by the American Jewish Committee, which appeared in The New York Times on October 10, 2000.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEACE

After the dead have been buried, the sirens silenced, and the rubble swept from streets where rioters rampaged, what lessons will have been learned from these recent days of bloody confrontation between Palestinians and Israelis?

Two are essential: When mobs are incited to violence by Palestinian media and political and religious leaders, chaos ensues. And when Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation breaks down because Palestinian police and militiamen join in the mayhem and turn their guns on Israelis, the level of conflict crosses a terrible threshold, and the toll of suffering soars.

We grieve for the victims of the senseless violence that has erupted in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. We pray for the safe return of the Israeli soldiers kidnapped by Hezbollah marauders who stole across the international border from Lebanon.

We reel from the desecration and of destruction of Joseph's Tomb, a holy place, on the Sabbath, by a Palestinian mob and the murder of a pious Jew trying to save sacred Torah scrolls.

We yearn for the peace that will end for both peoples this cycle of needless pain.

With Israel and the Palestinian tantalizingly close to agreement in talks aimed at resolving their bitter conflict, these days of violence fomented by the Palestinians needn't have happened.

Innocent blood needn't have been spilled.

It wouldn't have—if Palestinian political and religious leaders had not deliberately overblown a visit by an Israel politician to Jerusalem's Temple Mount, Judaism's holi-

est site, and launched a furious campaign of attacks on Israeli civilians and soldiers.

It wouldn't have—if a sermon during Friday prayers at Al-Aqsa mosque hadn't called on the Muslim faithful to "eradicate the Jews from Palestine" provoking assaults on Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall and eliciting a defensive response by Israel.

It wouldn't have—if the Palestinian Authority hadn't emptied its schools, where Israelis' status as the enemy is continually taught, so that children could be bused directly to confrontations with Israeli forces and into harm's way.

It wouldn't have—if Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat's Fatah lieutenants in Gaza and the West Bank hadn't ordered waves of armed strikes by paramilitary forces against Israeli targets.

It wouldn't have—if Palestinian Authority radio and television hadn't bombarded the airwaves day after day with calls to rise up against Israel.

Finally, the conflict that engulfed Israelis and Palestinians wouldn't have happened if Chairman Arafat had assumed that responsibility of leadership and acted to calm rather than inflame his people.

In the end, there can be no other path for Israel and Palestinians than the path of negotiated peace, based on compromise and the need to bring their conflict to an end.

Acceptable alternatives simply do not exist. For the Palestinians and for Arab leadership across the Middle East, there is no choice but to grasp the long-outstretched hand of Israel, and assuming responsibility for peace.

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